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FEMA CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

FOR THE MID-CAREER PROFESSIONAL

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

Employees at Grades GM/GS-13 and Above

Introduction

This Career Planning Booklet is for your use; the decision to share any part of what you write in it is yours alone. Its purpose is to help you do a systematic analysis of your career and its future and to make plans for your development.

PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Most employees who are presently at the GM/CS-13 or above grade levels begin their work life in a technical specialty or profession. Whatever that technical specialty, we initially win approval and promotion for our performance within that profession. Later, forks in the career path begin to occur. We face, once or repeatedly, the choice of remaining in our technical specialty or moving into supervisory and management roles.

We tend to know the nature of the opportunities in our specialty; we often do not know as much about our managerial opportunities. Do you know the different promotional opportunities for which you might qualify? List them below under the appropriate heading (if you don't know of managerial opportunities, consult with someone who can tell you what they are).

PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	MANAGERIAL OPPORTUNITIES
1._____	1._____
2._____	2._____
3._____	3._____
4._____	4._____
5._____	5._____

If you have made a firm decision to remain in your professional field for the foreseeable future, several of the exercises which follow will not be useful to you. Look for exercises marked with an asterisk (*) which will be useful to you in your career development planning.

PROFESSIONAL MANAGERIAL CONFLICT

Many of the following items ask you to respond "YES [] NO []." Often you may not be sure of your choice, but indicate which is the more likely answer.

Many professionals resent the constraints imposed by management and disdain managers as ex-professionals and bureaucrats. Do you share this view? Even if you do not share this view, how would you feel about being seen this way by your former colleagues? If a colleague, learning of your decision to move

into management, chided you for "betraying" your professional commitment to join the "paper pushers," how would you respond? Write your response here._____

_____

_____

_____

PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION

In an organization whose management is drawn from the professional ranks, professional reputations often follow people into management. It may be difficult to lead successfully a group of operations research analysts, for instance, unless one was known as a good operations analyst before becoming a manager. Are you now viewed by your peers as a better-than-average performer in your field?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If your answer is "no," how should you approach this problem?

_____

_____

IMPACT OF MANAGER

One of the forces which encourages professionals to become managers is the desire to have an influence or impact on a larger sphere of activities than is possible for a technical specialist. Do you frequently experience a frustration at not being able to get involved in a broader range of organizational issues and problems?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Alternatively, do you tend to view the range of issues and problems outside your specialty as merely an unwelcome distraction from your own specialization?

YES ☐ NO ☐

GETTING WORK DONE THROUGH OTHERS

One frequently seen definition of management is getting things done through others. Have you done this? List some examples.

_____

_____

_____

When you did this management-like activity, did you enjoy it? Explain:_____

_____

_____

Did you receive feedback that you had done it well? What was said?_____

_____

_____

Managers usually find that their toughest problems are "people problems". Give some examples of people problems with which you have dealt._____ "PEOPLE PROBLEMS"

_____

_____

Did you enjoy dealing with those problems? YES ☐ NO ☐

Did you see any evidence that you had handled these problems well? Explain:_____

_____

_____

Would you like to deal with such problems as a major part of your work?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Another characteristic of managerial life is working against deadlines much of the time. Is your job like this? WORKING AGAINST DEADLINES

YES ☐ NO ☐

How do you feel about working under these conditions?_____

_____

When considering a move from your present professional field to management, one thought to consider is whether you could later move <u>back</u> to a professional job. What would be the barriers to such a return? List:_____ RETURNING TO YOUR PROFESSION

_____

_____

Sometimes an individual is asked by his boss to apply for an announced vacancy. Do you believe that it is likely that you would be asked to do so? REQUESTED TO APPLY *

YES ☐ NO ☐

Explain your reasons:_____

_____

_____

If asked to apply for a management position, would you do so willingly and enthusiastically?

YES ☐ NO ☐

SELECTION FOR MANAGEMENT

In order to become a manager one must be selected for a vacancy. List below the factors about you which would influence a decision to select you today.

Positive factors	Negative factors
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Compared to others who would likely apply, do you believe you would be selected?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Why?_____

_____

_____

SATISFACTION

Assuming you can be selected to be a manager, would you like the job? In formulating your answer, think about your responses to the question above. List below what you believe you would like and dislike about the job.

(Specify the job)_____

Factors liked	Factors disliked
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

On balance, do you believe you would like this job?

YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE ☐

Reflecting on your answers to the above questions, do you believe you could be a good manager? YES ☐ NO ☐

Why?_____

_____

_____

The following items describe the work of a manager in the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

SELF APPRAISAL

Consistent Strength	Adequate	Development Objective	
			A. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
☐	☐	☐	High priority projects identified and evaluated
☐	☐	☐	Low priority projects identified and evaluated
☐	☐	☐	Regional priorities identified and evaluated
☐	☐	☐	Proposals developed
☐	☐	☐	Agreements negotiated, drafted and evaluated
			B. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
☐	☐	☐	Human Resource requirements defined and related to program mission
☐	☐	☐	Recruitment and hiring of Human Resources coordinated
☐	☐	☐	Performance Plans, Quarterly Reviews and Annual Appraisals completed
☐	☐	☐	Individual performance problems analyzed and solved
☐	☐	☐	Position Management Plans developed
☐	☐	☐	Training and Career Development Plans evaluated
☐	☐	☐	Awards and Incentives prepared/reviewed
☐	☐	☐	Personnel Management Policies/Practices monitored for compliance
☐	☐	☐	Employee conduct and responsibilities, discipline, grievances, appeals, and adverse actions handled.

Consistent Strength	Adequate	Development Objective	
☐	☐	☐	EEO, FWP, Upward Mobility and related programs supported and maintained
☐	☐	☐	Labor-Management relations coordinated
☐	☐	☐	Safety program monitored and supported
			C. PHYSICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
☐	☐	☐	Facilities monitored and construction proposed
☐	☐	☐	Major capital repair and maintenance needs identified and evaluated
☐	☐	☐	Equipment needs identified and evaluated
☐	☐	☐	Use of Physical Resources evaluated
☐	☐	☐	Travel requests assessed and approved
☐	☐	☐	Physical Resource Management policies monitored for compliance
☐	☐	☐	Fund Accountability monitored
			D. PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA
☐	☐	☐	1. Oral Communication: Effectiveness of expression in individual or group situations
☐	☐	☐	2. Written Communication: Ability to express ideas clearly in writing and correct in grammatical form
☐	☐	☐	3. Leadership: Effectiveness in getting ideas accepted and in guiding a group or individual to accomplish a task
☐	☐	☐	4. Interpersonal Insight: Skill in perceiving and reacting sensitively to the needs of others, objectivity in perceiving impact of self on others

Consistent Strength	Adequate	Development Objective	
☐	☐	☐	5. Planning and Organization: Ability to efficiently establish an appropriate course of action for self and/or others and get results
☐	☐	☐	6. Problem solution: Skill in identifying causes of performance problems, proposing alternative solutions, and solving problems
☐	☐	☐	7. Stress Tolerance: Ability to perform under pressure and opposition
☐	☐	☐	8. Creativity: Ability to generate, recognize, and/or accept imaginative solutions and innovations
☐	☐	☐	9. Decisiveness: Ability to make sound decisions and take decisive actions
☐	☐	☐	10. Flexibility: Ability to adapt managerial approach to changing organizational needs and situations
☐	☐	☐	11. Reasoning: Ability to apply a sound reasoning and logical process to varying situations, problems, goals, and activities

As you look at the lists above, think of the things you have done which are similar to the above work assignments. List some examples below and evaluate each in the columns to the right.

Examples	Check only those that apply: Enjoyed doing task	Did task well	Bosses liked my work
1._____	☐	☐	☐
2._____	☐	☐	☐
3._____	☐	☐	☐
4._____	☐	☐	☐
5._____	☐	☐	☐

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

	Examples	Check only those that apply Enjoyed doing task	Did task well	Bosses liked my work
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	1._____	☐	☐	☐
	2._____	☐	☐	☐
	3._____	☐	☐	☐
	4._____	☐	☐	☐
	5._____	☐	☐	☐
PHYSICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	1._____	☐	☐	☐
	2._____	☐	☐	☐
	3._____	☐	☐	☐
	4._____	☐	☐	☐
	5._____	☐	☐	☐

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Using both sets of lists above as sources, complete the following items concerning your strengths and weaknesses.

	Strengths	Weaknesses
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	1._____	1._____
	2._____	2._____
	3._____	3._____
	4._____	4._____
	5._____	5._____
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	1._____	1._____
	2._____	2._____
	3._____	3._____
	4._____	4._____

Strengths	Weaknesses	
1.	1.	PHYSICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
2.	2.	
3.	3.	

It is important to try to anticipate the positive and negative impacts of alternative career choices on your life. Think about your career and life now. List below some examples, feelings, situations, etc., which you like and dislike about your career and life now.

PRESENT CAREER

Like	Dislike	
1.	1.	(Career now)
2.	2.	
3.	3.	
4.	4.	
1.	1.	(Life now)
2.	2.	
3.	3.	

Now suppose you are five years in the future. You have decided to remain <u>in your technical specialty</u> and have made normal career progress. Projecting yourself into that future, answer the same questions.

FUTURE PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Like	Dislike	
1.	1.	(Future Professional Career)
2.	2.	
3.	3.	
4.	4.	
1.	1.	(Future life)
2.	2.	
3.	3.	

FUTURE MANAGERIAL CAREER

Finally, suppose you are again five years in the future and you have spent the last three years as a manager. Project yourself into this future and try to imagine what your day would be like. Again, answer these questions.

	Like	Dislike
(Future managerial career)	1._____	1._____
	2._____	2._____
	3._____	3._____
	4._____	4._____
(Future life)	1._____	1._____
	2._____	2._____
	3._____	3._____

CAREER HISTORIES*

You are _____years from retirement. Suppose the local newspaper ran a story about your retirement and your career. What would that story say if (a) you remain in your speciality, and (b) you become a manager? Write below 2 paragraphs of each story. Write it first as you believe it will be;

_____ Retires after 30 years with the Agricultural Research Service as a:

PROFESSIONAL	MANAGER

then as you wish it could be.

_____ Concludes Outstanding 30-Year Career with Federal Emergency Management Agency as a:

PROFESSIONAL	MANAGER

Looking at the four previous career summaries, two realistic and two idealistic, how would you feel about attaining each? Which would give you the greatest feeling of satisfaction? Which would please you least? Why?

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS *

You have spent the last several pages thinking about the nature of your life and career: the way it is now, how it might be in some alternative futures. You have had an opportunity to look at the nature of managerial life, and think about living it. Now you must make a decision (which, of course, can change later) about the direction of your career. You have at least four options:

1. You can prepare for a career in management.
2. You can prepare to be better at you professional specialty.
3. You can do a combination of 1 and 2 above.
4. You can do other things which interest you more, and forget about career development, at least for now.

Your most honest answer may be No. 4. Career development demands a willingness to work harder than you work now: do your present job well, meet your family responsibilities, and prepare for the future. Since most people are busy, what typically suffers are the recreation and leisure aspects of quality-of-life. For many people, and their families, this may be an unrealistic price to pay for a chance at a promotion which, if received, will probably increase the "usual" amount of time, effort, and energy devoted to work.

Undaunted, you may decide that your safest choice is No. 3. That is, you may want to prepare for growth in both your professional and managerial futures. While this has certain obvious advantages, it has one large disadvantage: it divides your energies so that you may not make sufficient progress in either field. The next several paragraphs focus on the issue of moving into management. If you have decided to remain in your professional field, skip ahead to page 15.

COACHING FOR THE FUTURE MANAGER

What follows is intended to be coaching for the future manager. Some is taken from career planning sources, some is from actual conversations with successful managers. None of this advice is guaranteed to make you a successful manager. On the other hand, as your grandmother probably said about the curative powers of chicken soup, "It wouldn't hurt."

Think of two very different managers you have known well, whose managerial ability you admire. List some admirable qualities of each below.

Good Manager A	Good Manager B	Yourself
1._____	1._____	1._____
2._____	2._____	2._____
3._____	3._____	3._____
4._____	4._____	4._____

Now examine these qualities and note in the column headed "Yourself" the extent to which you have these characteristics. What have you learned from doing this? _____

_____

_____

Eugene Jennings 1/ has created a set of rules for developing a managerial career, which he calls the rules for "executive chess." Among his rules are the following: CAREER STRATEGY

1. Maintain the widest set of options. That is, don't become overspecialized and don't remain in a staff or other specialized role if you aspire to management.

2. Don't be blocked by immobile supervisors. They will block your career path and will not develop you. Seek by-pass strategies such as lateral transfers. Never become a crucial subordinate to an immobile manager.

3. Become a crucial subordinate to a mobile manager. This person will stretch your capabilities and be a role model for your career, also take you along as he rises in the organization. How can you tell if you are crucial? You are if your behavior has real impact, if you have many important special assignments.

4. Always favor increased exposure and visibility. Make sure people know just how well and how hard you are working.

5. Be prepared to practice self-nomination. Let people know you are interested in growth and broadening assignments and especially in promotion.

6. Leave an organization at your own convenience. If you see problems coming in a job, don't wait until they become a disaster. Leave on good terms before this happens, via transfer or change of organization.

You need to think about the right timing for your move into management. This move will often require geographic mobility which might interfere with, for example, children finishing high school with their friends, or a spouse's career plans. You wouldn't be the first promising future manager, presently living in the so-called Sun Belt, who was not eager to apply for a vacancy in North Dakota or Nebraska. CAREER TIMING

1/ Eugene E. Jennings, "Routes to the Executive Suite." New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971

Generally, the time to make the move into management is as soon as possible. However, in the technically-oriented organizations, establishing one's credentials as a highly competent professional may be well worth the delay in terms of future credibility with one's subordinates.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

What kinds of things can you do to (a) help yourself be seen as having potential for management and (b) be a better manager once selected for a management position? You will want to begin to think about organizational situations from a manager's point of view. And you will probably want to begin practicing managerial behaviors---for example, personal organization, leadership, and interpersonal skills---in the context of your present job. Beyond this, you will want to engage in some development toward management either formally or informally.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Formal education for management encompasses both non-credit courses offered through the workplace and university courses. University courses can be selected to meet developmental needs or aggregated into a Master of Business Administration or Master of Public Administration degree. Both the MBA and MPA are normally 2-year programs for persons whose prior degrees were not in business or public administration, one-year programs for those with such prior background. Universities also offer shorter certificate programs for managers on some campuses.

Informal ways to learn skills relevant to management exist both on and off the job. On the job you can volunteer to take on special tasks, extra duties, and other jobs which will give you a chance to practice managing and to demonstrate managerial ability. If your supervisor knows you are interested in managing, perhaps you can convince him to delegate to you some aspects of the managing role so you can gain experience. Assignments to special committees, task forces, and projects offer excellent opportunities for experience and exposure.

Books, periodicals, and newsletters are excellent sources of information on management principles and practices. A wide variety of such material is available through local libraries, bookstores, and mail order. Self-instructional training materials are also available on some supervisory and management subjects. Your training office can provide assistance and guidance.

A word of caution and explanation is needed. You may be wondering how you will do these things and your present professional job and do both well in a 40-hour week. The simple, truthful answer is that you will not be able to do so in a 40-hour week. Most managers work longer workweeks,

arrive early, leave late, and take work home. They do this in spite of their efforts to work more efficiently, more rapidly, and to delegate as much as possible. Do they feel oppressed by the work load? For the most part, they enjoy their work and consider themselves fortunate to be able to spend their time doing something they enjoy.

There are also developmental opportunities off-the-job which you can utilize. Assuming leadership in organizations, non-partisan political efforts, fund drives, children's groups, church activities, civic groups, or appointive citizen advisiory boards in the community are all possibilities.

You can probably think of ways to practice managing off-the-job--low risk opportunities to lead others, make the inevitable mistakes, and learn from those experiences.

PREPARING THE IDP

Now you are ready to begin an Individual Development Plan or IDP. Whether you have decided to prepare for management or to prepare to be a superior professional (scientist, accountant, analyst, etc.), you can use the IDP guide which accompanies this booklet to plan your development. The process will initially appear straightforward, but you may find it becomes complicated as you begin to try to diagnose your own developmental needs. Consider asking your supervisor, a colleague, a friend, your spouse, your administrative officer, a personnel specialist, or a career counselor at a nearby college for help. Refer back to the materials on these pages to get data for your IDP. Pages 5, 6, 7, and 8 should be especially helpful.

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